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HITS OPERATION OF TIMBER FLOATING RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Central Scientific Research Institute for Water Timber Transport and Hydroengineering has been in Leningrad for about 20 years. The institute has at its disposal an excellent scientific laboratory and experimental base.

The research work of the institute has been largely directed toward technical progress in timber-floating operations. However, while the steady progress of the timber industry has been presenting the institute with more and more problems, the institute has in recent years been lagging in meeting the demands made on it.

A study of conditions prevailing in the institute leads to the simple conclusion that there is no coordination in the work of its scientific personnel. Purposeful, collective work on problems of prime importance is lacking.

Floating workers, especially designers of floating installations, need a new calculation method for the construction of booms and log-storage ponds. The institute has been working on this problem for 5 years without result, and it is not known when a solution will be achieved. The institute has been writing a manual on roadsteads for more than 6 years, and is taking even longer to write a manual on dams. It is not known when they will be available for distribution.

Timber felling is increasing year by year. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the floaters to cope with initial transport of the felled timber under the existing floating method. The time has come to organize bundle (puchkovy) floating to supplement free floating. Such a change would involve a change in the organization of floating work. Initial floating of timber in bundles is an important problem. The institute is charged with solution of this problem, but actually only one man is working on it.

The institute is responsible for the continuous perfection of floating production techniques and technology, but in recent years little has been done along these lines.

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At the experimental base of the institute stands the rusty framework of an odd-looking metallic piece of equipment. The institute has expended considerable funds on this model of a new rafting machine, but is now requesting permission to abandon the project. The Scientific Council of the institute criticized the creation of this machine as impractical long ago, but the machine's designer had supporters in the Ministry of Timber Industry USSR. The supervisors of the institute ignored the council's decision and construction of the machine continued. At the same time, no attention was paid to building a rafting machine designed by another engineer, although it appeared to have vast advantages over rafting machines now in existence.

There is also a cutter, equipped with a hydraulic excavating device and winch, at the experimental base. The cutter, according to its designer, is to be used as an escort vessel in free-floating operations. The Scientific Council also pronounced this cutter entirely unsuitable for the intended purpose. However, the author of the project is Orlov, chief engineer of Glavlesosplav (Main Administration of Timber Floating), so the institute directorate ignored the council's decision and continued construction of Orlov's cutter. About 800,000 rubles already have been spent on it.

The cited examples could be multiplied, but these indicate that the present supervisors of the institute manifest neither devotion nor energy to the tasks entrusted to them.

The Ministry of Timber Industry USSR subordinated the Central Scientific Research Institute for Water Timber Transport and Hydroengineering to the Main Administration of Timber Floating. A natural consequence is, therefore, that purely departmental interests of the main administration are imposed on the research work performed at the institute.

The research institute is only remotely associated with production; its workers do not study the accomplishments of production workers. Such important questions as how timber floating operations on such rivers as the Volga will be organized several years hence and how timber will be transported through the new canals are considered superficially and slowly.

An amazingly indifferent attitude toward the use of the institute's scientific workers' time prevails in the main administration. It is considered a matter of course there to send for a senior scientist or sector supervisor and to assign him the preparation of statements and summaries. Then, the scientist sits in an office carrying out such orders.

The main administration is also amazingly indifferent to the projects of the institute. The institute labored a long time to build a power plant operating on wood fuel. In 1949, it succeeded in constructing a highly economical plant operating on any kind of waste wood. The plant was in operation at the institute's experimental plant for 2 years. Its advantages -- high efficiency, small size, simple and safe operation -- were demonstrated. It would appear that not only the Main Administration of Timber Floating, but also the Ministry of Timber Industry USSR should have placed the plant into serial production long ago. But nothing has happened.

The Ministry of Timber Industry USSR should reorganize supervision of the institute if it wishes the institute to be a real scientific research base for water timber transport.

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